



11136CH08

# 8

## LIVING AND WORKING IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter the learner is able to–

- understand the relationship among the individual, the family, community and global society.

In the previous chapters you have learnt a lot about yourself. Understanding oneself is the first step towards understanding others. Every individual lives and grows in a social context. Hence, to understand the development and behaviour of an individual it is necessary to understand the immediate context such as one's family and the larger socio-cultural milieu.

As the individual grows and develops, she/he forms a growing network of relationships with others. The family is the primary and most immediate environment for the individual. During childhood, one's activities, roles and interpersonal relations are generally shaped in consonance with the family context. As the child grows, her/his interactions with other settings such as the school, peers and neighbourhood enhances.

All these systems operate within the larger culture and context which include belief systems, norms, resources, opportunities and constraints. All aspects of daily living such as food, nutrition, clothing, resources, communication approaches and strategies, and interactions and relationships are affected by the larger systems in one's own society and increasingly by other societies as well. Any change, positive development or conflict, even in the distant environment, extends to the other settings and influences the individual too. This is particularly applicable in the present era of globalisation wherein the boundaries between countries are less rigid and the world is becoming more and more interconnected in different ways – geographically, economically, culturally, and politically. The term “globalisation” refers to increased inter-connectedness and

exchange between people across the world in the form of goods, services, money, and information. Although globalisation is not a new development, its pace has increased with the advent of new technologies, especially in the area of telecommunications.

Each society is increasingly influenced by events and developments occurring in other societies of the world. For example, the US sub-prime crisis of 2008 impacted economies across the world and the ripple effect was seen on the financial status of markets, families and individuals in India. Many people lost money invested in shares and stocks or even their jobs; hence they had to adjust their living standards markedly. Fashion trends are another example. Increasingly we find ourselves adopting international fashion trends in our dressing styles. Similarity the style of dress is prominent in urban youth across the world, and between rural and urban youth in India. Our everyday lives are thus influenced not only by what we experience in our families, schools and neighbourhoods, but also by events occurring at the global level.

What is important to note here is that we are not passive entities that simply absorb any influence that comes our way. Every individual is an active being who interprets the external influence or input according to her/his own unique personality and cultural sensibilities. An example from fashion is the adaptation of the Western style of wearing jeans with T-shirt to wearing jeans with *kurta*. Furthermore, each individual in turn also influences the environmental contexts or persons with whom she/he comes into contact. For example, it is not uncommon to find adolescents

### ACTIVITY 1

Think and note down two to five examples from your family where you may have influenced your parents' or other members decisions.

or even younger children influence their parents on matters such as the brand and colour of a new vehicle or the place they want to visit during the holidays. Thus the influence is two-way. Even in your own family, you would find that not only are you being influenced

by your parents, but in some areas they too are being influenced by you.

Contexts and individuals are dynamic. Across the life course, an individual passes through different stages of development and situations. At the same time, the settings also undergo change. In the present times, the pace of change is so rapid that what we know as "generation gap" may occur not only between two generations, i.e., between parents and children or grandparents and grandchildren, but it may also be evident between older and younger siblings. What was an accepted practice or way of thinking three years ago may have now changed. Those of you who have older or younger siblings may be able to think of instances when you and your sibling argued about something because both of you felt that what you were saying was the right way to do something. Do you recall saying, "When I was of your age....." to younger siblings or children?

Thus, individuals are embedded in their context and both shape each other. This is a reiteration of what you read in the 'Introduction' Chapter, i.e., individuals have a close relationship with their environment. The quality of one's life is influenced by the different ecological contexts including the family, the neighbourhood, the community and the society, both local as well as global. In Unit II we will move from understanding oneself to understanding the contexts of family, school, community and society.

### Key Terms

Globalisation, Bi-directional ways, Culture, Adaptation, Context

### ■ REVIEW QUESTIONS

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1. Describe 'globalisation'. Identify some of your everyday practices and interests that may have been influenced by global trends or events.
2. Discuss the ways in which you think you have influenced your parents.
3. Think about your own family and identify two instances when you felt there was a generation gap between you and your parents.